

Story 2166 (1999 Tape 9)

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of İzmir Province

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Laz<sup>1</sup> Adjusts Stable Door

One day Temel's<sup>2</sup> horse became sick. Temel sold that horse and bought a new horse. This second horse was satisfactory, but because it was a little taller than most horses, it had difficulty entering the stable. Every time it entered the stable its ears rubbed against the top of the door frame. This seemed to make the horse nervous, and so Temel decided to remedy the situation. He got out his tool chest and began to trim off enough of the lintel to allow the tall horse to pass beneath it freely.

As Temel was working on this, his friend Dursun came

<sup>1</sup>The word Laz originally referred to an ethnic minority living along the extreme eastern end of the Turkish Black Sea coast, mainly in Trabzon and Rize provinces. As time has passed, the term has broadened to include all Turkish residents living along the entire Turkish Black Sea coast. The Laz people are stereotyped as being stupid or inept, and there are countless jokes and anecdotes that so picture them. This stereotype, like most others, is baseless, for Lazes are much like other people.

<sup>2</sup>In folklore Laz males are usually given one or another of five names: Temel, Dursun, Cemal, Hızır, İdris. By far the most popular of these names is Temel. When a lead character in a folktale is named Temel, the Turkish audience knows at once that a Laz story will follow.

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along. Dursun asked, "Temel, what are you doing?" After Temel had explained the problem caused by the height of his new horse, Dursun offered him a suggestion. "Instead of cutting a piece out of the top of the door frame, you could more easily make an adjustment for your horse's height by digging some dirt from the bottom of the door

Temel replied, "All right! All right! That may be a good idea," but he was relieved when Dursun continued on his way. Temel then renewed his work on the lintel, both laughing and talking to himself. "What a fool that Dursun is! I told him that my horse's ears were rubbing against the top of the door frame. I did not tell him that my horse's feet were rubbing against the base of the door. Why should I dig out soil from the base of the door? Dursun's brains do not serve him very well."